

Proposed Framework for Establishing the Missouri River Recovery Implementation
Committee (MRRIC)

My name is Todd Rauch and I am the Manager of Water & Rail Transportation for MFA, Incorporated. MFA is an agricultural cooperative serving the needs of our 45,000 farmer owners in Missouri and several adjacent states. To carry out our mission of serving the needs of our farmer owner's efficient and reliable transportation plays a key role. More specifically, our farmer owners depend on efficient and reliable transportation to provide them with fertilizer and market their grain output. Because of the importance of transportation and the effect, that MRRIC can have on transportation in the Lower Missouri Basin is the basis for my comments.

While the MRRIC is in the initial draft and is being considered for final draft there are some specific issues I would like to bring to your attention.

The wording "and the ecosystem upon which they depend" should be wholly removed from all MRICC documents. MRICC should focus on the federally protected species and the protection and enhancement of the socioeconomic benefits of the Missouri River.

The goal of the MRRIC should be to do no harm and only embrace those plans that would show socioeconomic benefit to and protect the congressionally authorized purpose, people, and property of the Basin while seeking to aid the species.

Section B.1. That states, "As social values have shifted over the years, the emerging consciousness of the value of a healthy ecosystem has focused the basin's attention on restoration of the Missouri River."

Being one of many Lower Basin stakeholders I strongly disagree and feel it needs to be beneficial to both the Upper and Lower Basin.

The second point I would like to make is the selection process of members being on the MRRIC is vastly unfair and will force people to spend all their energy and resources to get a seat on MRRIC and not be concerned with real issues at hand. A Federal Working Group needs to be formed so anyone can initially participate and be considered for a seat later.

The term "recovery must be clearly defined and must include nationwide definition that addresses the movement of a particular species from one river to another. The recovery must not be confusing to the reader with a certain amount of success or failure to be attached to the outcome. The program must include the lower Mississippi states to be considered a "true" success.

The state of Wyoming should not be part of the MRRIC since the state has no direct impact from the Missouri River management and has no specie recovery issues. The framework for MRRIC is a good start to a very long process that will benefit all the parties involved and will be affected by the outcome of the decision MRRIC will make to improve the river for all the stakeholders. Thank you.